

SHELBY COUNTY

Honorable James R. Kramer

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Council Priorities

1. The issue of highest priority in Shelby County is the need for affordable and accessible transportation to all services provided to the community.

There are no available, accessible and affordable transportation options for Shelby County citizens.

2. Focus on expansion of space and capacity of the Family Resource Center to offer services and programs to the community, acting as the central point of contact for compiling and keeping resource information current and disseminating this information to the general public.

The services currently provided by the Family Resource Center are limited because of space and the accessibility of the Family Resource Center. The site is located in a section of the county of limited population limiting sustainability of the program. It could be located in a more accessible part of the county in order to expand services provided to the community and serve as a central site for dissemination of resource information and programs. The original site will still serve as a satellite location and would still provide the services needed in that community.

3. Increase resources available to the county to address health and mental health issues such as psychiatric services for children, parenting skills/awareness, drug intervention/prevention programs, independent living for 16-19 years olds and dental/health services for low-income families including Hispanic families.

Shelby County is the fastest growing county in the state including a fast growing Hispanic sector. With this expansion in population comes a need for more programs and resources to meet the needs of the expanding community and the diversity of the population to be served.

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county

Early Care Education

Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Out of 121 childcare centers, 85 are licensed and 3 are nationally accredited in Shelby County. Families in Shelby County need more licensed quality childcare facilities in order for children to enter kindergarten with the necessary foundation for success in school

Action Steps

- 1) Determine needs of families in Shelby County for childcare.
- 2) Increase number of Shelby County child care providers working towards quality improvements and accreditations.
- 3) Increase frequency of professional development workshops in Shelby County particularly on how to open and operate quality childcare centers.

Develop a fully functioning early care and education network that collaborates with others to positively impact the quality and coordination of child care in Shelby County

Action Steps

- 1) Determine how to increase membership and participation.
- 2) Plan and implement regular meetings.

Shelby County children, ages 0-5, are in continual need of medical and developmental screenings

Action Steps

- 1) Collaborate with Jefferson County Early Care and Education committee of the Jefferson County Children's Policy Council to identify current screening policies/activities of preschool/childcare programs in Shelby County.
- 2) Encourage collaborative efforts among existing agencies to provide training on developmental/health screening best practice procedures to interested preschools and childcare programs.
- 3) Assist and participate in any community or school programs with health fairs and/or health screenings.

Economic Security

Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Shelby County families would benefit from increasing their knowledge and confidence in parenting skills to give their child the best possible start in life

Action Steps

- 1) Develop a brochure listing parenting resources in Shelby County.
- 2) Encourage a continued distribution of parenting kits through birthing hospitals in Shelby County.
- 3) Support operation of the Family Resource Center in Vincent.

The youth of Shelby County need a unified and comprehensive plan of services and resources for work readiness and job related skills, particularly focusing on youth who have barriers to employment

Action Steps

- 1) Survey, record and distribute job related resources available for youth in Shelby County including tutoring and "Catch-up" programs.
- 2) Identify gaps in services and seek community partnerships to fill those gaps.
- 3) Increase availability and accessibility of sites for GED prep/testing and Work Keys Program.
- 4) Devise a unified and comprehensive plan of services for youth with varying job related needs.

Shelby County lacks independent living programs for youth transitioning into the work force

Action Steps

- 1) Survey the IL resources already in existence.
- 2) Develop an action plan supporting the expansion of the Family Resource Center to a more central location.
- 3) Investigate the possibility of a partnership with Alabama Power Company for the development of IL resources.
- 4) Explore with county management personnel support and assistance for the development of IL resources.

Shelby County lacks transportation services for youth and their families

Action Steps

- 1) Continue to support efforts to establish transportation services in Shelby County.
- 2) Identify all sources of transportation currently available to youth and their families.
- 3) Continue to seek partnerships with all entities interested in establishing a successful transportation program for youth and their families.

Education

Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Shelby County will work to fill gaps in services in schools to address mental health issues with children beginning in primary grades, including substance abuse problems, anger management, bullying and behavior modification

Action Steps

- 1) Identify mental health services and procedures for payment of services.
- 2) Investigate feasibility of applying for a Safe Schools grant.
- 3) Investigate reinstituting psychiatric services at Shelby Baptist Hospital.
- 4) Develop a resource list of services available.

Shelby County will work to provide options for youth at risk for dropping out of school or having left the school system for re-entry to school programs or permanent employability

Action Steps

- 1) Collaborate with Economic Security Committee to implement "Work Keys" program.
- 2) Invite School of Technology representative to meet with Education Committee.
- 3) Maintain communication with Fast Forward Pilot Project and give support to system wide implementation.

Shelby County will work to provide affordable community and summer programs for youth and their families to include independent living skills, life skills, health, nutrition, parenting skills, ESL, recreation and formation of a diverse Youth Advisory Council

Action Steps

- 1) Investigate and record current resources in the community.
- 2) Identify gaps in services.
- 3) Identify transportation needs.
- 4) Support formation of a Youth Advisory Council.

Health

Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

Shelby County lacks bilingual interpreters for all medical facilities serving ESL families and children of the area

Action Steps

- 1) Survey health providers in Shelby County to determine the need for interpreter services to serve the Hispanic population.
- 2) Provide a list of providers who have interpreters available or use interpreter services for ESL families.
- 3) Investigate funding for securing additional interpreters for county medical needs including the Community Health Foundation funds.

The need for education of families in Shelby County about emergency preparedness in the event of pandemic flu or other catastrophic emergency events

Action Steps

- 1) Develop a traveling display of a mock emergency kit for the home for presentation at school events such as PTA/PTO meetings and Open House to educate parents and emphasize the need to be prepared for catastrophic emergencies such as tornadoes, flooding and pandemic flu.
- 2) Organize and seek out community opportunities to distribute educational materials.
- 3) Develop a plan to expand educational opportunities concerning emergency preparedness to the county and other service agencies such as organizing Health Fairs, having booths/displays at other community events.

Shelby County has a need to develop a resource base for distribution of emergency living supplies and monies

Action Steps

- 1) Survey and list current resources available to the county.
- 2) Organize data according to specific categories and identify gaps in services.
- 3) Investigate and engage faith-based initiatives to help with securing basic living supplies; i.e. food, diapers, payments for electricity, water, etc.
- 4) Identify dentists and health professionals willing to donate services to low-income families.

Shelby County has a need for transportation for specialized medical care services in county and into the surrounding counties

Action Steps

- 1) Support efforts and work with committees when possible to provide affordable and accessible transportation to Shelby County.

Keep drug and alcohol issues at the forefront of community efforts

Action Steps

Parent Involvement Skills

Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Shelby County will address the need for additional targeted parenting classes and programs; i.e. ESL parenting, parenting programs for 0-5

Action Steps

- 1) Investigate partnerships with Public Health and school system for a pilot parenting class for Hispanic families (Parent Project, F.E.E.L).
- 2) Research funding possibilities for HIPPY program and Bright Beginnings at Family Resource Center in Vincent.
- 3) Research and update current parenting resources and programs.
- 4) Publish a new brochure of parenting programs to be widely distributed in the county.

Shelby County parents need to be more involved with their children's schools in the education of their children

Action Steps

- 1) Recruit parents to work on this committee.
- 2) Study involvement issues - Who /What/Where/When/Why.
- 3) Partner with the school system to develop a plan of action to address the identified issues.

The Family Resource Center of Shelby County needs to expand services provided and needs to locate a more accessible site to provide services

Action Steps

- 1) Support the establishment of a planning committee to help expand the services of the Family Resource Center.
- 2) Investigate partnerships for expansion of Family Resource Center services.
- 3) Investigate appropriate central location for larger facility.
- 4) Investigate funding possibilities including the County Commission.
- 5) Support transportation efforts to get families to services in all areas of the county.

Safety

Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Shelby County has a need for affordable and accessible psychiatric services

Action Steps

- 1) Identify current resources.
- 2) Determine payment sources and options from providers.
- 3) Approach psychiatrists who may be interested in providing services.
- 4) Seek pro-bono services for low-income families.

Shelby County has a need for safety and preventive services for at-risk, pre-delinquent youth and families where eminent danger does not exist

Action Steps

- 1) Identify and list current resources, including faith-based providers.
- 2) Identify gaps in service.
- 3) Elicit court support in filling the gaps in service.
- 4) Collaborate with other committees to determine services needed.
- 5) Coordinate development of service provision for at-risk cases. I.e. less intensive wraparound services.
- 6) Work to build a centrally located Family Resource Center to increase availability and accessibility for community services for families and children.
- 7) Coordinate an Educational Conference to promote resources located in Shelby County and provide professional development opportunities for mental health providers.
- 8) Continue efforts to address alcohol and drug issues with teens.

Shelby County has a need for independent living services and transitional living options for at-risk 16-19 year olds, including those being aged out of the DHR system and/or dropped out of high school

Action Steps

- 1) Collaborate with Economic Security Committee in filling gaps in services.
- 2) Consult with United Way of Central Alabama regarding options for transportation within the county.
- 3) Promote "Work Keys" on-line program in appropriate sites throughout the county for identified at-risk students.
- 4) Encourage development of residential Independent Living Program apartments and group home facility within the county.
- 5) Explore development of community-wide ILP experiential life-based training and education program for youth, ages 14-19.

Policy Recommendations

- Continue to pull down the state match for the CCDFBG.
- Create a cohesive system to address quality childcare standards, i.e. quality rating system for Alabama.
- Develop a state tax credit for dependent care expenses that are reimbursed on a tiered system based on the quality of childcare utilized by the taxpayer.
- Develop a state tax credit for childcare providers that are reimbursed based on the level of quality care provided.
- Establish an on-line statewide resource directory of services for families and children.
- Facilitate dialogue and partnerships among local and state agencies that serve families and children.
- State funded universal pre-k for Alabama's 4-year-olds Compulsory education beginning at age 5.
- Now that the Governor's Task Force on Family Resource Centers has conducted its studies and understands the needs of the various communities around the state, please follow up these studies with funds to establish and expand services for Family Resource Centers around the state.
- Provide funding for mental health services in the school.
- The Shelby County CPC recommends that the age for services to youth provided by the state be synchronized with the legal age of majority in the state, thereby, making state services available to all youth under the age of 19.
- Provide access to local health care and RESPITE care for families who have children with special health care needs.

Accomplishments

- Penny Kakoliris has served as the Children's Policy Council Coordinator and Coordinator of the Shelby County Children's Service Facilitation Team until the end of 2004. That was the year of many changes. Judge Patti Smith left Juvenile Court to assume a position on the Alabama Supreme Court. Judge James R. "Jim" Kramer was elected Juvenile Judge and assumed the Chairmanship of the Shelby County Children's Policy Council. Penny assumed the position of Corporate Vice President of Southern Oaks Residential Academy. For a year and a half, the CPC Coordinator's position was vacant.
- Barbara Williams, MA, former Field Director for North Alabama for the Alabama Department of Children's Affairs, filled the CPC Coordinator's position in April of 2006. Since that time, the Shelby County Children's Policy Council has regrouped its working committees, had three general CPC meeting and many committee meetings working on various projects but concentrating on the Needs Assessments for 2006. Everyone has worked very hard and we have formed some new partnerships with Jefferson County to try to fill gaps in service.

- On June 1, 2006 the Shelby County CPC co-sponsored an Independent Living Program for 60 at risk- teens, ages 14-18, from Shelby and Jefferson County at the King's Ranch. The program was called "Living in the Real World" and focused on three main areas: money management, sex and family education, and drug awareness. It was a great success and has been requested to be repeated in different locations around the county. The partnerships for the success of this program were: The King's Ranch, Southern Oaks Center, Shelby County Children's Policy Council, Shelby County Juvenile Court, Shelby County Extension Services, S.A.F.E., Inc. (Sex and Family Education), Save the Youth, Shelby County DHR, and Jefferson County DHR.
- United Way of Central Alabama has accomplished a Needs Assessment of its own which is an entirely different approach. They have conducted a phone Needs Assessment surveying families across five county areas. The results will be available very soon. Preliminary results are surprisingly close to the results we are getting with our Needs Assessments.
- In June, 2006 Impact Education, Inc. was invited to demonstrate its JEDI (Juvenile Education Initiative) program, which started with much success in the Arkansas Juvenile Detention System statewide. Representatives from the Shelby County Detention Center, the Juvenile Court System, the Shelby County School System, Southern Oaks Center, the D.A.Y. Program, and the Children's Policy Council were invited to the demonstration. Rep. Mike Hill of Columbiana also attended along with representatives of the Massey Group of Montgomery. Impact education, Inc. is seeking partnerships with a progressive juvenile facility to use as a pilot project for the state of Alabama tracking educational progress of juveniles placed out of their home school and offering remediation in problem areas of school while the students are out of their home school area with their on-line educational services. Rep. Hill has pledged \$5000 out of his state discretionary money to apply to the program if Shelby County agrees to participate. A committee will reconvene to discuss the merits of offering such a program through the Juvenile system and its subsequent step-down or step-up programs located in Shelby County.
- In July, we are launching our long awaited website where general announcements and information will be posted along with committee updates and the local resource directory (which still remains a work in progress). Our new website will be www.shelbycocpc.org. Check us out!